Green Card Scheme

2419. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Germany has extended Green Card Scheme for Overseas Information Technology specialists to work in Germany;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any limit has been prescribed for issue of work permits under the Green Card Scheme; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The German Federal Cabinet approved the extension of the so-called "Green Card initiative" for foreign IT specialists. First time applications can be submitted until 31st December, 2004. The new imigration law passed by the German Parliament on 9th July, 2004, aims at attracting skilled workers into Germany including in knowledge based areas and provides for the possibility of offering permanent residence status to highly qualified specialists and foreign university graduates.

(c) and (d) There is no prescribed time limit for issue of worK permits under the Green Card Scheme. However, the new regulation cancels the earlier fixed maximum limit of 20,000 work permits.

Mail processing

2420. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that to ensure a dedicated mail transmission system to cater to the special customer needs, local mail has been segmented from non-local mail;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and